

THE SPLENDOUR OF THE EAST

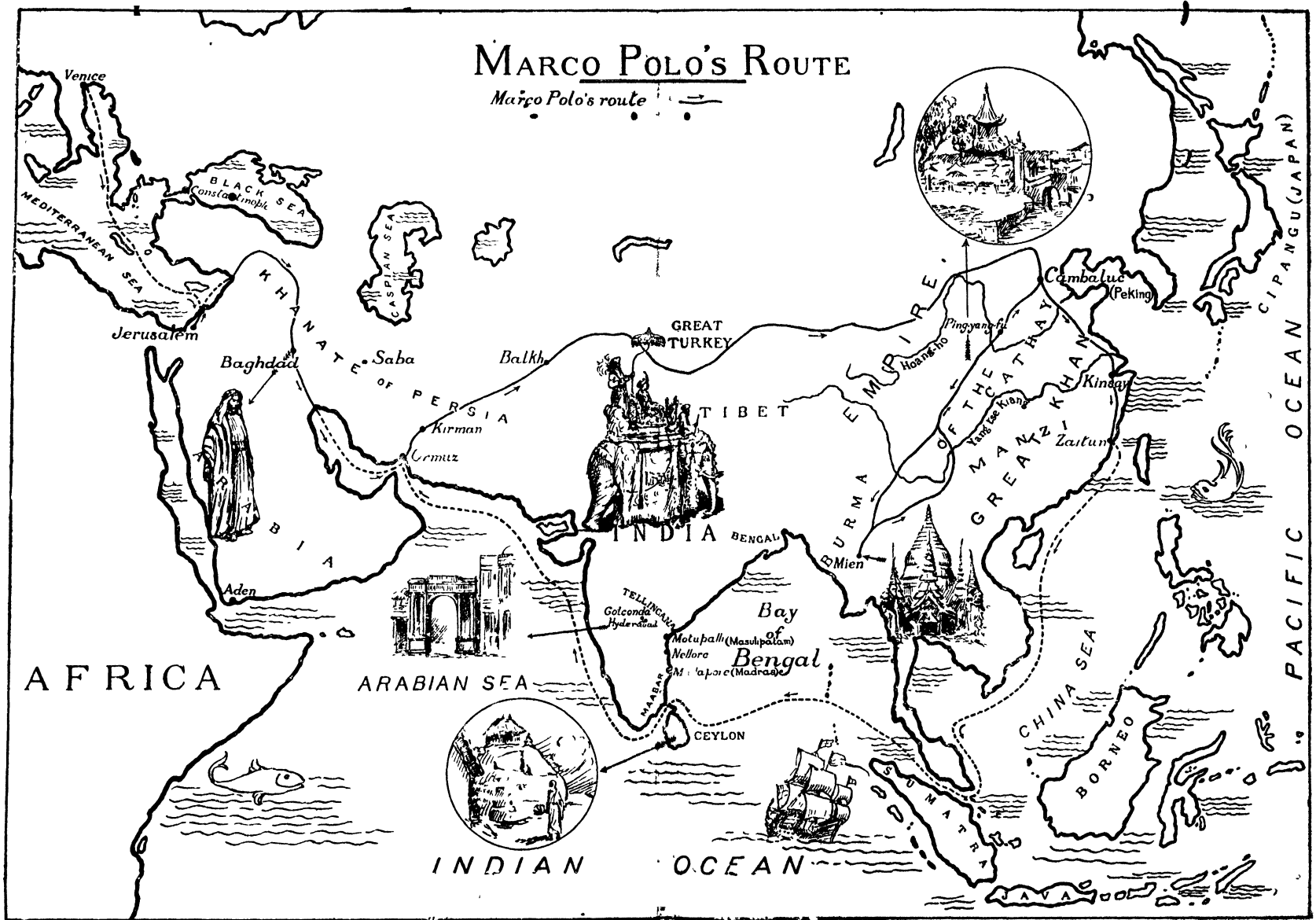
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THE ~~TRAVELS~~ OF MARCO POLO
ADAPTED
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED

MADRAS, BOMBAY, CALCUTTA AND LONDON

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Marco Polo's route



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SELECTIONS FROM
THE TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO

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INTRODUCTION

HISTORY records but few "accidents" of such significance to future ages as the adventurous journey of the three Venetian traders, Nicolo, Maffeo and Marco Polo into the very heart of Asia, which to the millions of Western Europe in the thirteenth century still represented the vast Unknown. It may be true that the Polos were inspired by purely material interests and aims, but no one can be insensitive to the romantic element in all their experiences and achievements. It may also be true that their contribution to Western knowledge was not intentional, but merely accidental. The fact remains, however, that they risked their all in a remarkable and perilous enterprise, and that it was Marco Polo who revealed to an incredulous Europe the majestic civilization of Asia. It was primarily his book of travels that awakened European interest and ambitions in Asia, and more particularly in China, with results that still exert a vast influence on the destinies of the modern world.

The Polos.

Andrea Polo of San Felice was the father of three sons, Marco, Nicolo and Maffeo, and Nicolo

was the father of our Marco, the author of the book from which the contents of the present volume are taken. The three Polo brothers were engaged in commerce, the elder Marco having an establishment in Constantinople and carrying on business in partnership with Nicolo and Maffeo. About the year 1260, the two younger brothers set out across the Euxine to the Crimea on the firm's business, but owing to the sudden outbreak of civil war among the Tartars, they could not return to Constantinople by the route by which they had come. They therefore went up the Volga to Sarai, the capital of Kipchak, which was under the rule of a powerful chief of the Western Tartars, named Barka, and from there crossed the desert to Bokhara, where they stayed for nearly three years, presumably trading. Certain envoys of the Great Khan Kublai, who had been on a mission to his brother Hulagu in Persia, arrived at Bokhara and persuaded the two Venetian traders to accompany them to Cathay, where they said the Great Khan would gladly welcome them. The opportunity seemed too good to be missed, so Nicolo and Maffeo joined the envoys, and after a year's travelling reached the court of Kublai. They were the first Europeans the Great Khan had seen, and he asked them many questions about the Latin world, and showed great interest in all that they

told him about the West. It was not long before they were given authority to travel freely in all directions over his vast Empire with the status of imperial envoys. After some time Kublai sent them back to Europe on a mission to the Pope of Rome with letters requesting him to send a hundred learned men to instruct the Khan's subjects in Christianity and Western knowledge. This journey took the brothers three years, and they did not reach Acre in Palestine until 1269. On their arrival, they learned from the Papal Legate that the Pope (Clement IV) was dead, and they went home to Venice to await the election of his successor. There Nicolo found that his wife was dead, but he met once more his son Marco, now fifteen years old.

The Great Journey.

The new Pope had not yet been elected when, after a stay of two years in Venice, they decided to set out again to Peking, taking young Marco with them. Having arrived at Acre, they obtained some of the holy oil from the lamp of the Holy Sepulchre, in accordance with the Khan's request, and secured from the Papal Legate letters explaining and authenticating the causes of the partial failure of their mission. They had again begun their journey when news reached them that the Legate had himself been

elected Pope. They hastened back to Acre, and the new Pope now gave them letters to the Khan in the name of the Holy See and sent with them two preaching friars in place of the hundred learned men for whom Kublai had asked. Even these two friars, however, were too frightened of the Tartars to go more than half-way, and returned to Europe. The three Polos reached the court of the Great Khan in May 1275, after spending three years and a half on a journey which to-day would take a week by rail.

Service under Kublai.

Kublai Khan gave the Venetians a very cordial reception, and young Marco, who was now about twenty-one, gained his special favour. The "young gallant", as the book calls Marco, set himself to learn the Tartar language. Kublai was struck with his intelligence, and soon appointed him to the public service. Marco had noted the Great Khan's passion for striking stories of strange countries and peoples, their civilizations and their manners and customs, and had observed his impatience with those of his officers who could not provide him with anything but the stale official reports. During his travels in Kublai's dominions, Marco therefore took pains to remember such facts or incidents as would interest the Emperor, and used to relate

them to him on his return to court. As his accounts of the curious habits and practices of the people among whom he had travelled were invariably picturesque and entertaining, Kublai took particular pleasure in Marco's tales of his adventures, so for seventeen years Marco, his father and his uncle remained in the service of the Great Khan. If this part of their story had ever been placed on record, it would doubtless have been even more remarkable than the hazardous journey which had brought them to the court of the Tartar Emperor who was master of half the World.

The Return Journey.

It was only natural that after so long a period of exile the Polos should think of returning to their home. Besides this, Kublai was growing old, and they had to think of the risks to which they might be exposed in the event of their patron's death. It was not for some time, however, that they could induce the Great Khan to give them leave to quit his service and begin their homeward journey. At last an opportunity presented itself when Arghun, Khan of Persia, lost his wife and sent envoys to Kublai's court to obtain a bride in obedience to the dying wishes of his queen. Kublai selected a princess, whom Arghun's envoys were to escort to Persia. As

the overland route from Peking to Tabriz was unsafe owing to a war which was then in progress, they decided to go by sea, and persuaded Kublai to let them take the Polos with them, as their experience would be invaluable on the journey. The voyage was begun in 1292, and it was two years before the travellers reached Persia. Two of the three envoys and most of the crew perished on the way, but the Polos and the princess survived the perils and hardships of the voyage. The princess did not find the husband she had expected, for Arghun had died even before the party had left Cathay, and she became the wife of his son Ghazan. The Polos finally arrived in Venice in 1295.

How the Book came to be written.

Three years after their return, war broke out between Venice and Genoa, as a result of the latter's jealousy of the rising mercantile power of the Venetians. Marco Polo offered to equip and command a galleon against the Genoese. A great naval action was fought on the Adriatic between the two fleets on September 7, 1298, and the Venetians were defeated, the Genoese capturing all but a few of their galleys. Marco Polo himself was taken prisoner, and for over a year remained a captive in a Genoese gaol until there was an exchange of prisoners in 1299. During

his capture he formed a friendship with a fellow-prisoner, Rusticiano of Pisa. It was Rusticiano who persuaded Marco to dictate to him the account of his travels which was to have so momentous an influence on the relations of Europe and the East. After his release, Marco returned to Venice, married, and lived for about another twenty-five years. He fell ill in 1324 and died some time before June 1325, though the exact date is not known.

The Polos' Route.

From the order of the chapters in the book, and other internal evidence, we are able to trace the course of the second journey of the elder Polos to the East when they were accompanied by Marco. They sailed from Venice to Acre towards the close of 1271, and from Acre went to Layas. Thence the party proceeded to Sivas and Tabriz, and so by Yezd and Kirman south to the port of Ormuz, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. Their intention had probably been to go to Cathay by sea, but they returned northward through Persia, and traversing Kirman and Khorasan, pushed on to Balkh and Badakshan. Here their journey was broken owing to Marco's illness, but in due course they crossed the Pamir plateau and descended into Kashgar, Yarkhand and Khotan. From Khotan the party went on to

the neighbourhood of Lop-Nor, and thence crossed the Great Gobi Desert to Tangut, which was the name then given to the region in the extreme north-west of China, both within and outside the Great Wall. It was thus, after their journey over the vast desert, that they entered China.

Bibliography.

As has already been stated, it is to Rusticiano of Pisa that we are indebted for Marco's *Travels*, since it is possible that but for him our traveller would never have put his experiences into writing. Rusticiano was the author of some prose versions of the old romances of King Arthur, which he had written in French. It was accordingly in that language that he wrote down Marco's story, though it was probably dictated to him in the Venetian dialect or Italian. This manuscript in what a later editor describes as "very barbarous" French was freely copied and translated into most of the languages of Europe, as well as Latin, the universal language of the time, and many of these versions took considerable liberties with the text. The French Geographical Society published the oldest known version of the book from manuscript in 1825. Forty years later a version which Polo had himself revised and corrected for presentation to a French ambassador was printed, and the oldest Italian version was

reproduced in 1867. The classical English version of the *Travels*, made by Sir Henry Yule and based on the earliest texts, appeared in 1871. There are nearly eighty texts of Marco Polo's story, but Sir Henry Yule considered that the only two trustworthy versions were Rusticiano's, which he calls the Geographical version, and Ramusio's, which, though written three centuries later, contains much material that is both new and authentic. The language used in the standard English translation by Sir Henry Yule is that of the King James Bible. The selections from the *Travels* included in the present volume are given in simpler English, and the spelling of the proper names has been altered to the forms now in general use.

The Book.

Marco Polo's book is made up of two parts: a Prologue, the only portion containing any personal narrative, and a number of chapters depicting notable sights, manners, and customs among the different peoples of Asia, especially those under the rule of Kublai Khan, concluding with a chronicle of the internecine wars among the Tartars during the latter half of the thirteenth century.

Marco Polo's title to fame.

About the year 1289 Pope Nicholas IV sent Giovanni di Monte Corvino to Cathay. He was

the first Catholic missionary to reach the capital of the Tartar Empire, though Papal envoys and other travellers had also visited it previously. It was left to Marco Polo, however, to make Asia *live* before the Western mind as no one else had ever done. His Book is not a mere string of travellers' tales. It is an account of the "Wonders of the East" given by a man who had a kind of natural poetic gift, whose simple phrases are charged with more significance than the most ornate and studied language. His narrative contains no "purple patches," and he shows no extraordinary powers of description, but it is clear that he had a penetrating mind, a vivacious spirit, a keen eye for the peculiar and fantastic, and a retentive memory. It is the curious and the marvellous that attracts him rather than the picturesque. Only occasionally does a stray glint of humour light up the grave narrative, as when, in speaking of the issue of paper money by the Great Khan, he remarks that Kublai might be said to possess the true philosopher's stone, as he made his money at will out of the bark of trees. Polo's title to renown is not that he was the first traveller to trace a route across the whole length of Asia, the first to explore the perilous regions of the unknown East, but that it was he who first revealed to Europe the ancient and splendid civilization of Asia, especially that of the Tartars

and the Chinese. The period of Mongolian supremacy in China was one of unexampled expansion in the history of empire-building, and it was Marco Polo who was primarily instrumental in bringing its achievements to the knowledge of the West. His book found its way among all classes of people in Europe, and his pictures of the remote and mysterious regions of the East fired their imagination, though his statements were for a long time disbelieved and even ridiculed. It is true that the wonders of the garden in Cambaluc, a veritable garden of Eden, the twelve hundred bridges of the City, the magnificence of Kublai's Court, the colossal wealth of the Princes, the lavish feasts, the gorgeous processions, and all the superb extravagance surrounding the person of the Tartar Emperor, cause Marco to indulge in a certain amount of imaginative exaggeration. On the whole, however, he gives a correct and trustworthy account of all that he saw, despite some obvious inaccuracies and the presence of a certain amount of hearsay in his work. The scholarship of Sir Henry Yule and others has given a book which was once regarded as a mere collection of traveller's tales the position of an authoritative and valuable contribution to geography and ethnography.

THE MISERLY CALIPH

BAGDAD is a great city, where the Caliph of all the Saracens used to live in days gone by. It was at that time the centre of the Saracen world, just as Rome, the seat of the Pope, is the centre of Christendom. In the year of Our Lord 1255, the ruler of the Tartars of the Levant, whose name was Hulagu, a brother of the Great Khan, marched against Bagdad with a vast army and took it by storm. This was a daring and remarkable enterprise, for the city had a garrison of no less than a hundred thousand cavalry, besides a large body of infantry. When Hulagu took possession of the city he came upon a tower which was filled with gold and silver and precious things of every kind; indeed, it is said to have held the greatest quantity of treasure ever found in any one place. Hulagu himself was astonished at the sight, and, summoning the Caliph to his presence, he said to him: "Caliph, tell me the reason why you amassed this enormous hoard of treasure? What did you intend to do with it all? Were you not well aware that I, your enemy, would one day march against you and hurl you from your throne? Why, then, did you not make use of some of your wealth, and

pay your knights and soldiers so liberally that, for their own sakes, they would have dared anything in defence of you and your city?"

The Caliph did not know what to say, and made no reply. Thereupon Hulagu continued: "Caliph, since this treasure is so precious to you for its own sake, you shall feast upon it to your heart's content." So saying, he ordered his men to shut the Caliph up in the treasure tower, and to see that he had nothing to eat or drink.

"Now, Caliph," said Hulagu, "feed on your treasure as freely as you will, since you love it so dearly, for you shall have that to eat and nothing more."

The Caliph died a miserable death after four days in the tower. The treasure he had accumulated would have saved him and his throne if he had employed it in the defence of his people and his possessions. As it was, it brought about his ruin.

THE THREE KINGS OF PERSIA

(Marco Polo narrates in this extract a legend current in Persia regarding the Three Kings, or Magi. They are buried, he says, in the city of Saba, side by side, in three very large and beautiful monuments, with a square building above them. The bodies have not decayed, and the hair and beard remain. One of the Kings was called Gaspar, the second Melchior, and the third Balthasar. Though he made many enquiries, the people of Saba could not give Marco any other particulars except that they were three Kings who had been buried there in ancient times. But at a village called Cala Ataperistan ("The Castle of the Fire-worshippers"), which was three days' journey from the city, he heard the following story).

THE people say that in days of old three kings of that country went on a journey to worship a certain prophet of whose birth they had heard, taking with them offerings of three kinds—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—in order to find out whether the prophet was God, or an earthly king, or a physician. They argued that, if he accepted the gold, he was an earthly king; if he took the frankincense he was God; but if he chose the myrrh he was a physician.

When they reached the place where the child had been born, the youngest of the Three Kings went in first, and he found that the child appeared to be just of his own age ; so he came out again, greatly astounded. The next of the Kings went in, and he too saw the child as someone of his own stature and age. Lastly, the eldest went in, and came forth again perplexed, for the same reason. Each told the other two what he had seen, and their wonder grew still greater. At last they decided that they would go in together—and when they did so, they saw a child that looked no more than its real age, that is, some thirteen days. Then they all worshipped it, and presented the gold, frankincense, and myrrh which they had brought as offerings. The child accepted all three gifts, and in return gave them a small closed box. After this the Three Kings began their journey back to their own land.

When they had been travelling for many days, they grew eager to know what it was that the child had given them. They opened the little box, and found inside it—a stone. What, they asked themselves, could be the meaning of this gift. Now its meaning was this:—When they presented their offerings, the child had accepted all three, so they said to themselves that he must be the true God, and the true King, and the true

Physician. The gift of the stone implied that this faith which had sprung up within them was to remain as firm as a rock; for their thoughts were known to Him whom they had worshipped. The Three Kings, however, did not understand what the gift signified, so they threw the stone into a well, and immediately they did so a fire from Heaven descended into that well.

When the Three Kings saw this, they were filled with awe, and bitterly repented having thrown the stone away, for they now realised that it had had a great and sacred meaning. So they took some of the fire and carried it back to their own country, and placed it in a rich and beautiful temple, where the people keep it continually burning, and worship it, and set light to all their sacrifices from it. If ever the fire happens to be extinguished, they go to other cities, even ten days' journey away, where the same faith is held, and obtain the sacred fire from them, and take it back to their temple. It was in this way that the people of this country became fire-worshippers.

THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

MULEHET is the name of the district in Persia in which the Old Man of the Mountain used to dwell in days of old, and the name means, in the Saracenic language, "the place of the Aram."

In a certain valley enclosed between two mountains, the Old Man, who was called Aladdin, had created a wonderful garden, the largest and the most beautiful that human eyes had ever seen, filled with every variety of fruit-growing trees. It contained the most beautiful pavilions and castles that could be imagined, all decorated with gold and exquisite paintings. There were also fountains that flowed freely with wine and milk, and honey and water. In this garden there lived many of the loveliest damsels in the world, who could play on all musical instruments, sing most sweetly, and dance in a manner that was delightful to behold. In a word, the Old Man had followed the description of Paradise which had been given by Mahomet, and he had done so in order to make people think that his garden actually was Paradise itself. So well did he succeed that the Saracens of those regions believed that this really was the case.



Aladdin's Wonderful Garden.

The only men who were allowed to enter the garden were those whom the Old Man had chosen to be his "Assassins". He built a fortress at the entrance, strong enough to resist any attack, and there was no other way of gaining admission to the garden. He used to entertain at his court many of the youths of the country, from the age of twelve to twenty, who had a taste for soldiering, and he used to describe the wonders of Paradise to them, as Mahomet used to do. They believed all that he told them, just as the Saracens believed Mahomet, and at last he would choose some of them, four, six, or ten at a time, and give them a certain potion, which caused them to fall into a deep sleep. While they slept he had them conveyed to his garden.

On awakening from their slumber, they found themselves transported to such a scene of wonder and delight that they never doubted that they were no longer on earth but in Paradise, and nothing would have persuaded them to leave the garden of their own free will.

The court of this Prince, whom we call the Old Man, was of the utmost magnificence, and the simple people of the neighbouring hills looked upon him as a great Prophet. When he wanted to send one of his young men on any mission, he used to administer the potion to him again and have him carried to the palace. When the young

man regained consciousness, he found himself in the castle, and no longer in Paradise, and it is easy to imagine how angry and unhappy he would be. He was then brought into the presence of the Old Man, before whom he bowed with all the reverence due to a prophet of such wonderful powers. The Prince would then ask him whence he came, and the youth would reply that he had just come from Paradise, and that all that Mahomet had said about it was true. This naturally roused in the other young men who were present, and who had not been admitted into the garden, the greatest eagerness to be allowed to enter it.

Accordingly, when the Old Man wished to have one of his enemies murdered, he used to say to the youth who came before him: "Go forth and kill so and so; and when you return, my angels shall take you back to Paradise once more. And if you should perish in the attempt, you may die happy, for I will send my angels to carry you back to Paradise." They were so utterly persuaded of his greatness and power that they would face any peril to carry out his wishes and so regain the Paradise whose joys they had tasted. In this way he surrounded himself with young men who were ready to do his bidding at any cost, and murder anyone whom he chose to name. The neighbouring Princes went in fear of their lives, and paid tribute to him in order not to incur his

wrath and meet their end at the hands of his "Assassins."

The Old Man of the Mountain also appointed two deputies whom he sent out to Damascus and Kurdistan respectively, where they followed their master's methods and got young men into their power for the same wicked purpose. Hulagu, lord of the Tartars of the Levant, heard of the Old Man's atrocious crimes and resolved to destroy him. In the year 1252 he sent a great army under one of his barons to besiege his castle, which was so strong that it held out for three years. At length, however, the garrison was forced by starvation to surrender, and the Old Man and all his followers were put to death. The castle itself and the marvellous garden of Paradise were razed to the ground.

THE TARTARS

THE Tartars are a nomadic people. In the winter they migrate to warm plains, where they find good pasture for their cattle, and in summer they move on to cool places in mountainous regions, where they can find a supply of water as well as grazing for their flocks and herds.

Their huts are circular, and are constructed of wands covered with felt. They can carry these with them wherever they go, for the wands are so skilfully woven and so firmly fastened together that the whole framework is very light. When they set them up, they always take care that the door faces the south. They also have waggons which are so well covered with black felt that the rain cannot enter. These waggons are drawn by oxen and camels, and carry the women and children. The women do all the buying and selling, and provide everything for their husbands and families, while the men attend to nothing but hunting and hawking and the care of their goshawks and falcons, except when they are engaged in warlike pursuits.

The Tartars live on the milk and meat which their herds supply, and whatever else the hunters

can obtain. They eat all kinds of flesh, including that of horses and dogs, and Pharaoh's rats, of which large numbers are found in the plains. They drink the milk of their mares.

The women are very virtuous and loyal to their husbands. They are also excellent housewives. Ten or twenty of them can live under the same roof in perfect friendship and harmony, without ever exchanging an angry word.

The marriage customs of the Tartars are as follows. Any man may have any number of wives, a hundred if he pleases, provided he can support them. The first wife, however, always ranks above the others, and she and her sons are considered to have a higher legal standing than the rest. The husband makes a payment to his wife's mother on his marriage, but the wife brings no dowry to her husband. Having so many wives, the Tartars naturally have more children than other races. They are permitted to marry their cousins, and if the father of a family dies, the eldest son (but not the others) may take any of his father's wives except his own mother.

A man may also marry the wife of his own brother if the latter should die. Weddings are celebrated with much ceremony.

As regards their religion, they believe in a Most High God of Heaven, to whom they offer

worship and incense every day, but they pray to Him only for mental and bodily health. They also worship a god of their own called Natigay, who, they believe, is the god of the earth, and the protector of their children, cattle, and crops. They show him great reverence, and honour, and there is an image of him made of felt and cloth in every hut, as well as similar images of his wife and children. The wife is placed on his left hand, and the children in front. When they are having their meals, the Tartars take the fat of the meat and grease the god's mouth with it, as well as the mouths of his wife and children, after which they take some of the broth and sprinkle it in front of the door of the house. When this has been done, the god and his family are considered to have had their share of the meal.

The mare's milk which they drink is prepared in such a way that one might take it for white wine. It is an excellent drink, and they call it *Kumiz*.

The clothes of the wealthy Tartars are for the most part made of gold and silk material, richly lined with costly furs, such as sable and ermine, vair and fox.

Their arms and armour are excellent as well as expensive. Their weapons consist of bows and arrows, swords and maces; but the bow comes

foremost, for they are splendid archers—indeed, they have no equals with the bow. Their body-armour is of *cuir bouilli*, made from the hides of buffaloes and other animals, which is very strong. They are fine soldiers, and very brave in battle. They are also more capable of enduring privations than people of other nations, for they will often go for a month, if necessary, without any regular food supply, sustaining themselves only on the milk of their mares and such game as they happen to bring down with their bows. Their horses also require nothing more than the grass of the plains, so that there is no need to carry quantities of barley, straw, or oats, and they are very docile creatures. If need be, their riders will remain on horseback, fully armed, the whole night, without dismounting, while their horses graze.

No other troops in the world endure such hardship and fatigue as these, and can be maintained at such little expense ; and for these reasons, they are the best possible soldiers for use in the conquest of large areas of country. At the present time they are undoubtedly the masters of more than half the world.

When a Tartar prince goes forth to war, he has an army of, say, a hundred thousand cavalry. He appoints one officer to the command of every ten men, another to every hundred, another to every thousand, another to every ten thousand.

Thus his own orders have to be addressed to ten persons only, and each of these ten persons has only to pass them on to ten others, and so on; so that no one has to give orders to more than ten people. Each officer is in turn responsible only to the officer immediately above him; and the discipline and order resulting from this system is astonishing, for the Tartars are very obedient to their leaders. A body of a hundred thousand men is called a *Tuc*; ten thousand a *Toman*; a thousand a *Miny*; a hundred a *Guz*; and ten an *On*. When the army is on the march they always send two hundred well-mounted horsemen in advance to reconnoitre, who always keep two days' march ahead. They have a similar detachment in the rear, and on either flank, as a precaution against a surprise attack. When they are out on an expedition over a great distance they do not burden themselves with anything but two leather bottles for milk, a small earthenware pot, in which to cook food, and a small tent, under which they may shelter from the rain. In cases of extreme urgency, they will ride for ten days at a stretch, without lighting a fire or taking a meal. On such occasions they subsist on the blood drawn from their horses by opening a vein. They let the blood run into their mouths, until they have had enough, when they staunch the flow.

They also provide themselves with milk, which is dried into a kind of paste, so that it can be easily carried, and when they feel hungry they put some of this into water, beat it up till it dissolves, and then drink the liquid. The paste is prepared by boiling the milk, and skimming off the cream which rises to the top. This goes into another vessel and is used to make butter, for the milk will not become solid until it is removed. After this the milk is put in the sun to dry. When the Tartars go out on duty, each of them takes with him some ten pounds of this dried milk, and every morning he puts half a pound of it in his leather bottle, with as much water as he thinks necessary. As they ride along, the milk-paste and the water in the bottle get well churned together into a kind of porridge, upon which the men make their dinner.

When they come to engage with the enemy, they never join battle, but keep perpetually riding round them and shooting into their ranks. As they do not consider it any disgrace to run away in battle, they sometimes pretend to take to flight, then as they ride away they turn in the saddle and pour their arrows thick and fast into their pursuers, and thus work great havoc among the enemy. Their horses are so perfectly trained that they will double back and forwards as nimbly as a dog in a very astonishing manner. In this way

the Tartars are as dangerous in retreat as if they stood and faced the enemy, for they can send a volley of arrows behind them just when their pursuers are confident of victory. When the Tartars find that they have killed and wounded a good many horses and men by this ruse, they wheel about, and return to the attack in perfect formation, uttering loud cries, and in a very short time they completely rout the enemy. When their opponents see them fly, and imagine themselves to have won the battle, they have in reality lost it; for the Tartars turn on them most unexpectedly, when they think the right moment has come, and this stratagem has brought them many a triumph.

All that has been related here applies only to the earlier race of Tartars. In these days they have greatly degenerated, for those who are settled in Cathay have taken to the customs and manners of the Idolaters of the country, and have abandoned their own, while those who have settled in the Levant have adopted those of the Saracens.

The administration of justice is carried on as follows. When a person has committed a petty theft, they administer to him, in accordance with the law, seven strokes with a stick, or seventeen, or twenty-seven, or thirty-seven, or forty-seven, and so on, always increasing the number by tens.

in proportion to the crime, and running up to one hundred and seven. Sometimes people die as a result of such a flogging. If the offence should be horse-stealing or some other grave crime, they cut the offender's body in two with a sword, though he is allowed to buy himself off by paying nine times the value of the things stolen. Every lord or other person who possesses beasts, such as horses, mares, camels, oxen, cows, or other cattle, brands them with a distinguishing mark, and then leaves them at large to graze over the plains, thus dispensing with the necessity of keeping a herdsman. The cattle belonging to the various owners get mixed together, but eventually every animal is identified and recovered by means of its owner's brand. They employ shepherds for their sheep and goats, however. All their cattle are remarkably fine, large, and healthy.

They have one notable custom which is worth recording. If any person has had a daughter who died before marriage, and another has had a son who also died before marriage, the respective parents arrange a grand wedding between the dead girl and the dead boy. There is, indeed, a regular marriage, if one may call it so. When the marriage contract and other documents are made out they throw them into the fire, in order, as they say, that the parties in the other world may know what has happened and look on

each other as man and wife. The parents, from that time, consider themselves related to each other, just as if their children had lived and married. Whatever dowry may be agreed on between the parents, those who are to pay it get it painted upon pieces of paper, and then put these into the fire, holding that in this way the real articles will reach the dead person in the other world.

NEW YEAR WITH THE GREAT KHAN

(The following is a description of the White Feast, which is held on the first day of the month of February, when the Tartar year commences. It details the ceremonies that take place at a table whereon is inscribed the name of the Great Khan.)

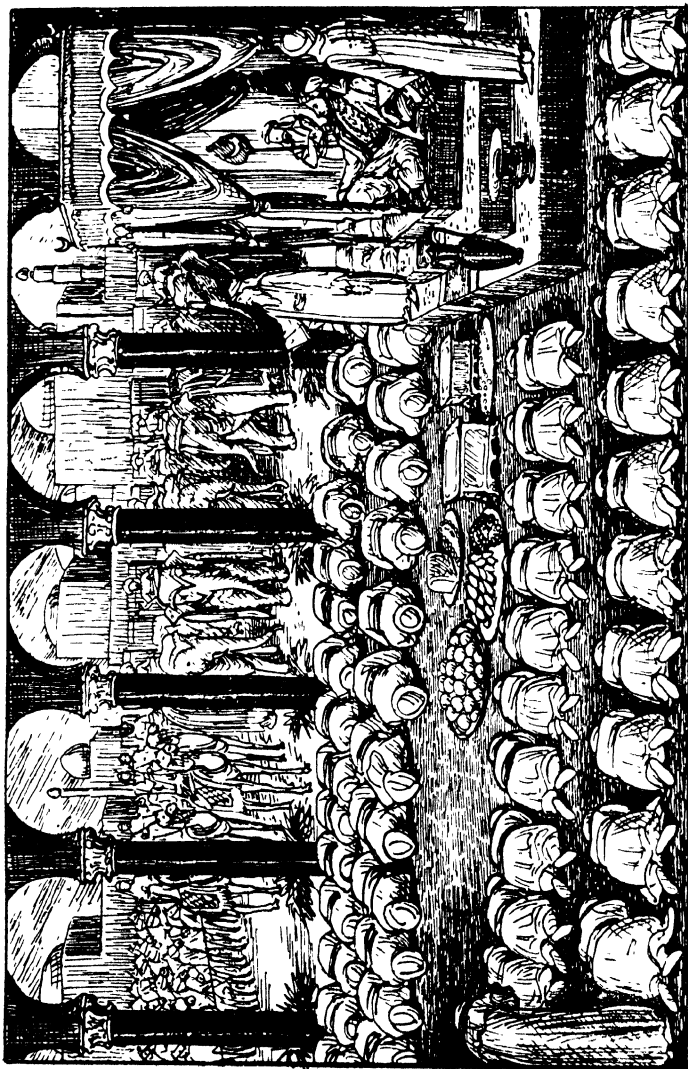
THE Tartar New Year begins with the month of February, and when it comes round the Great Khan and all his subjects hold a great feast.

It is usual on this occasion for the Khan and all his subjects to clothe themselves entirely in white garments ; so on that day everybody is in white, men and women, great and small. They wear this colour in order that they may be fortunate all through the year, for they regard white as emblematic of good fortune. On this day also the people of all the provinces and kingdoms owing allegiance to the Khan offer him valuable presents of gold and silver, pearls and precious stones, and costly robes. They do so in order that the Emperor may enjoy abundance of riches and uninterrupted happiness throughout the year. The people also make presents of white articles to each other, and embrace and kiss each other and make merry, and wish each other happiness and good fortune for the coming year. Among the

customary presents which the Great Khan receives from various quarters on this occasion, one important item is the gift of over a hundred thousand white horses. When a present is made to the Great Khan it is usual (at least when the province concerned is rich enough to do so) to give him nine times nine of the article of which the present consists. For instance, if a province is contributing horses, it sends nine times nine or eighty-one horses ; if gold, nine times nine pieces of gold, and so on.

It is on this day also that all the elephants of the Khan, totalling five thousand, are exhibited, in procession, draped in rich housings of embroidered cloth. Each of these animals carries on its back two splendid coffers filled with the Emperor's plate and other costly furniture for the use of the court on the occasion of the White Feast. These are followed by a train of camels which are likewise covered with rich trappings and laden with various articles needed for the Feast. All these pass in review before the Emperor, and form the finest spectacle in the world.

Moreover, on the morning of the Feast, before the tables are set, all the kings, and all the dukes, marquesses, counts, barons, knights, and astrologers, philosophers, physicians and falconers, and other officials from all the neighbouring regions assemble in the Great Hall, in the presence.



The people prostrate themselves, as a sign of reverence towards the Emperor.

of the Emperor, while those who cannot find room stand outside the building, in such a position that they are all within sight of the Emperor. This is how the whole assemblage is arranged. The first places are assigned to the Khan's sons, his nephews, and the other princes of the Imperial family; next to them come all the provincial kings; then the dukes, and then all the others in regular succession, each in his degree. When they are all seated, each in his proper place, the prelate rises and says in a loud voice, "Bow down and do reverence!" As soon as he had said this, the people prostrate themselves, touching the floor with their foreheads as a sign of reverence towards the Emperor, as if he were a god. They repeat this four times, and then approach a highly decorated altar, on which is a vermilion tablet with the name of the Great Khan inscribed on it, and a beautiful censer of gold. They incense the tablet and the altar with great reverence, and then each returns to his seat.

When all have performed this ceremony, the presents are offered, and after the Emperor has accepted and inspected them all, the tables are set, and the company take their places at them with perfect order. When the banquet is over, the jugglers come in and entertain the court. The function is then at an end, and every one returns to his home.

CAMBALUC

THE city of Cambaluc contains such a number of houses, and has such a vast population both in the city itself and in the outlying suburbs, that it is impossible to give an estimate of its size. There is a suburb beyond each of the twelve gates of the city, and these suburbs are so big that they are even more populous than the city itself. It is in these suburbs that the foreign merchants and travellers lodge, of whom great numbers come to bring presents to the Emperor, or to sell articles at court, or because they find here a good market for their goods. In each of the suburbs, as far as a mile from the city, there are many fine inns for the entertainment of merchants from distant parts of the world, and a special inn is assigned to each country. Thus there are as many handsome buildings outside the city as inside it, apart from those belonging to the great lords and barons, which are very numerous.

It is forbidden to inter any dead body within the precincts of the city. If the corpse is that of an Idolater it is taken beyond the city and suburbs to be burnt in a distant spot set aside for that purpose. If the dead person belonged to a religion

which sanctions burial, such as the Christian, the Saracen, or any other, it is also carried away to a special place well beyond the city and the suburbs. This measure does a great deal to preserve the health of the population.

Every night guards patrol the city, in parties of thirty or forty, looking out for any persons who may be abroad at unlawful hours, that is, after the great bell has struck three times. If any such person is found, he is immediately taken to prison, and questioned by the authorities next morning. If they find him guilty of any misdemeanour he is given a beating with a stick according to the seriousness of his offence. Sometimes, indeed, the flogging is so severe that people die as a result of it, but this method is adopted to avoid bloodshed, which their Bakshis consider a grievous sin.

The merchandise brought to this city is more rare and valuable and abundant than in any other city in the world. People of every kind and nation come from every country with their goods (including all the precious wares of India, as well as the fine and costly products of Cathay itself and its provinces), some of them intended for the Emperor, some for the court, some for the great city, some for the numerous barons and knights, some for the huge armies of the Emperor, which are stationed in the surrounding country. So,

between the demands of the court and city, the quantity brought in is enormous. For instance, there is never a day in the year when a thousand cart-loads of silk alone do not enter the city for use in the manufacture of silken fabrics, cloth of gold, and other goods. This is not surprising, for there is no flax in the country or anywhere round it, so that everything has to be made of silk. It is true, indeed, that cotton and hemp are grown in some parts, but the supply is not sufficient to meet the demands of the vast population. This matters very little, however, because silk is both plentiful and cheap, and is, of course, much superior to either flax or cotton.

There are something like two hundred cities at various distances round about Cambaluc, from which merchants come to bring their own goods and to buy others for their lords. They all contrive to sell and purchase whatever they wish, and the trade of the city is accordingly very great.

THE GOLDEN KING AND PRESTER JOHN

(During his travels in the great Mongolian Empire, Marco Polo heard many interesting tales. He visited Ki-chau (two days' ride from Ping-yang-fu), in the Western Province, where, he says, "there is a noble castle, built in time past by a king of that country, whom they used to call the Golden King," and he goes on to relate the following story).

THE Golden King was at war with Prester John, but the King's fortress was so impregnable that the latter could not get at him, much less punish him. Prester John's fury was great, but he met with no success until at last seventeen of his knights approached him and offered to bring the Golden King to him alive, if he so pleased. To this Prester John replied that he desired nothing better, and would show them his gratitude if they would do so.

When they had taken leave of their sovereign the seventeen knights set off together, and reached the territory of the Golden King. Having been admitted to his presence, they pretended to have come from a distant country, in the hope that he would take them into his service. The King told them that he would be very willing to

have them at his court, never suspecting that they had any evil design. Accordingly they were given employment under him, and served him so diligently for a time that he came to show them his full confidence and affection.

When they had been in his service for nearly two years, behaving themselves all the time as though no such thing as treachery could ever enter their minds, they went out hunting with him one day, when he had very few others with him ; for he had such complete trust in them that he always kept them in close attendance on his person. When they had crossed a river about a mile away from the castle, they saw that they were all alone with the King, and said to one another that the time had come to carry out their plan. Thereupon they all suddenly drew their swords, and told the King that he must go with them without offering any resistance, or he would be in peril of losing his life. Greatly astonished and alarmed, the King asked them where they were taking him, and received the reply : “ You are coming with us, whether you will or no, to our master Prester John.”

On hearing this the Golden King was so distressed that he would gladly have preferred death, and he said to them : “ For God’s sake have pity on me. You know the regard in which I have held you, and the honourable treatment you

have received at my court—and yet you say that you mean to deliver me into the hands of my enemy! Truly, if that is indeed your design, it will be an act of the basest!” But they only answered that it was their duty, and they led him away to their sovereign.

Prester John was delighted to see his enemy become his captive, and he greeted him with something like a curse. The king remained silent as though he did not know what answer was expected of him, and Prester John ordered his men to take him away, and set him to tend his cattle. While he watched the animals, he was to be carefully watched himself. Prester John gave the King this task because of the grudge he bore him, and in order to humiliate him and show how insignificant he was compared to his captor.

When the King had thus acted the herdsman for two years, Prester John sent for him, treated him with all the respect due to him as a King, dressed him in rich robes, and said: “Now, O King, do you acknowledge that such a man as yourself could not hope to defy me?” The Golden King replied: “O master, I know, and always did know, that I am in no way your equal.” Much pleased at this reply, Prester John said: “I ask nothing more; henceforth you shall be given all the service and honour that are your due.” Then

he gave him horses and weapons and a princely retinue and sent him back to his own country. From that time forward the Golden King was always the friend of Prester John, and showed him the utmost loyalty.

THE KING OF MIEN

THE King of Mien and Bengal was a very powerful sovereign, ruling as he did over a wide territory and a huge number of subjects, and possessing enormous treasure.

When he heard that the Great Khan's army had reached Wanchen, he decided to move against them with enough men to make certain of inflicting on them such a defeat that the Great Khan would never again invade his kingdom. With this end in view the King mobilised a very large army, and he also took with him two thousand elephants, who carried on their backs wooden towers, very strongly and solidly made, which could hold from twelve to sixteen well-armed fighting men. His infantry and cavalry numbered about sixty thousand men. In short he assembled a host such as befitted his rank and power, and capable of performing great feats of arms.

When the King had completed these vast preparations, he marched against the Tartar army without further delay. They met with no resistance, worth mentioning, to their advance until they came within three days' march of the Great Khan's army, which was then at Wanchen in

the territory of Zardanda. The King then pitched his camp, and halted in order to rest and refresh his troops.

When the news reached him that the King of Mien was coming against him with such forces, the Captain of the Tartar army, whose name was Nasruddin, felt some anxiety, for he had only about twelve thousand cavalry with him. However, he was a brave and skilful soldier, with considerable experience of warfare, and an admirable leader. The troops he commanded were of the finest, and Nasruddin gave them very careful orders and instructions for the conduct of the battle, and took every possible measure to enable them to resist the attack. The whole Tartar army of twelve thousand well-armed horsemen then advanced to meet the enemy on the Plain of Wanchen, and took up its position ready for battle. The Captain showed his good judgment in his choice of the ground, for near the plain there was a large and dense forest. It was close to this that the Tartars halted to await the foe.

When the King of Mien had halted long enough to refresh his troops, he resumed his march, and arrived at the Plain of Wanchen, where the Tartars were already in order of battle. Entering the plain, and approaching within a mile of the Tartars, he gave orders for all the castles that were on the elephants' backs to be

made ready for battle, and for the fighting-men to take up their positions on them. He then marshalled his infantry and cavalry with all the skill of the able ruler that he was, and moved forward to engage the enemy. The Tartars showed no dismay at their advance, but came to meet them with unshaken order and discipline. The two armies were almost face to face, and nothing remained but to join issue, when suddenly the horses of the Tartars became so panic-stricken at the sight of the elephants that they could not be induced to go forward, but kept on swerving and turning back, while the King of Mien with his soldiers and his elephants continued to bear down upon them.

When the Tartars saw what was happening, their fury and perplexity were equally great, for they realised that if they could not get their horses to face the enemy, all was lost. But at this critical moment their Captain acted like a true leader, as though he had anticipated every emergency before-hand. He immediately gave orders that every man was to dismount and tie his horse to a tree in the forest close at hand, and that they were then to take to their bows, with which they were superior to any other troops in the world. They rapidly obeyed, and plied their bows to deadly effect, sending such a hail of arrows upon the advancing elephants that in a



They plied their bows to deadly effect.

short time they had wounded or killed the majority of them, as well as the men in the turrets on their back. The enemy returned the fire, but the Tartars were better armed, besides being far better archers.

When the elephants felt the pain of the arrows, which pelted down on them like rain, they turned tail and fled, and nothing on earth could have induced them to go back and face the Tartars once more. They were entirely out of control and dashed away, raising such a clamour that one would have thought the end of the world had come. Plunging into the forest, they rushed off in every direction, hurtling their turrets against the trees, bursting their harness, and destroying everything that was on their backs.

When the Tartars saw that the elephants were completely routed and could not be made to take any more part in the battle, they immediately remounted their horses and charged down upon the enemy. A furious combat began with sword and mace. The two armies fought with great ferocity, exchanging deadly blows. The King's troops greatly outnumbered the Tartars, but they were no match for them in mettle or in experience of war, otherwise the Tartars would have been crushed by mere weight of numbers. It was a desperate struggle, and the din was so tremendous that a thunderstorm would have

passed unheard; but in the end the Tartars were victorious. When mid-day came, the King's troops realised that their cause was lost, and they turned and fled, pursued by the Tartars with merciless slaughter.

Before long, however, the Tartars gave up the chase and came back to capture the elephants that had run away into the forest. In order to do so they had to cut down many great trees to bar their passage, and even then they would have been unsuccessful without the assistance of some of their prisoners, who understood the creatures better than the Tartars did. Elephants are more intelligent than any other animals, but in the end they managed to catch more than two hundred of them. After this battle the Great Khan began to keep elephants in great numbers.

THE CITY OF KINSAY

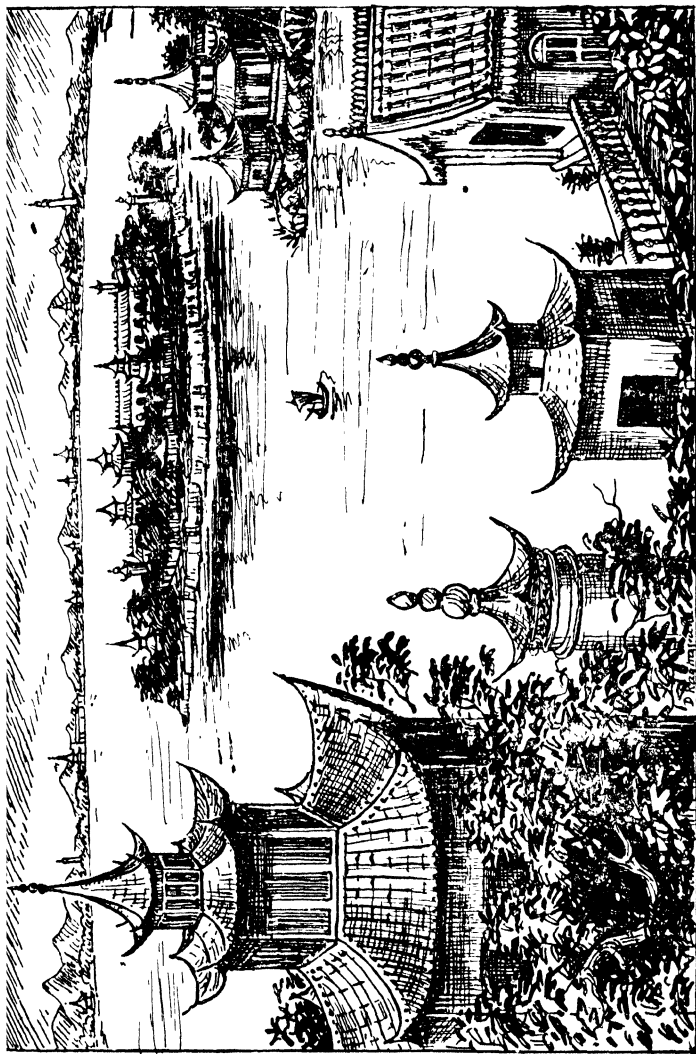
Kinsay ("The City of Heaven"), which Marco Polo says was "beyond dispute the finest and the noblest in the world," was the capital of the country of Manzi (Southern China). The account which the author gives here of the city is based on "the written statement which the Queen of this realm sent to Bayan, the conqueror of the country, for transmission to the Great Khan, in order that he might be aware of the surpassing grandeur of the city and might be moved to save it from destruction or injury." Marco follows that document closely and says he could vouch for its accuracy and truth, as he himself had occasion, at a later date, to visit the place.

FIRST and foremost, according to the Queen's description, the city of Kinsay is so large that it is a hundred miles in circuit. There are twelve thousand stone bridges in it, which are built so high that boats can easily pass under them. It is not surprising that there are so many bridges, for the whole city stands, as it were, in the water, and is surrounded by water on all sides, so that a great number of bridges are required to enable people to cross from one place to another. Though the bridges are very high, the approaches are so well contrived that carriages and horses can pass over them.

The document also states that there are twelve guilds for the different crafts in this city, each of which represents twelve thousand workshops which employ many workmen. Each shop contains at least twelve workmen, while some employ twenty and others forty. In spite of the large number of workmen in the city, every one of these craftsmen is fully employed, for Kinsay supplies the requirements of the whole kingdom.

According to the same authority, the number of merchants, and their wealth, and the quantity of goods that passes through their hands, is so enormous that no one could compute it. The masters of the different crafts, who are at the head of the workshops referred to above, do not labour with their own hands. Nor do their wives, who are brought up as delicately as if they were queens! It is a rule laid down by the king that every citizen must follow the profession of his father, and that no one may take up a different one even though he may be the possessor of a hundred thousand bezants.

There is a lake in the city, with a circuit of about thirty miles, and all round it there are many gorgeous palaces and stately mansions, of the richest and most exquisite structure that one can imagine, belonging to the nobles of Kinsay. On its shores there are also many abbeys and churches of the Idolaters. In the middle of the



The lake in the city of Kinsay.

lake are two islands, upon each of which stands a splendid, beautiful and spacious building, furnished magnificently enough for an Emperor. When an inhabitant of the city had occasion to give a marriage feast, or a celebration of any other kind, he could hold it in one of these palaces. He would find there every utensil and article necessary for such festivities, such as silver plate, trenchets, dishes, napkins and table-cloths, and everything else that could be required. These things were provided by the king for the convenience of his subjects, and the building was at the disposal of anyone who wished to give an entertainment. Sometimes there would be a hundred functions all going on at the same time, some of them banquets and others wedding feasts, and yet there was enough accomodation for all, and everything was so well organised that no party would ever be felt to interfere with any other.

Lofty stone towers are provided for the inhabitants in every street, to which they can easily remove their valuables for safety in the event of a fire breaking out in the vicinity of their houses. As most of the houses are constructed of wood, fires are by no means rare.

The people of the city are Idolaters. Ever since they were conquered by the Great Khan they have used paper-money as currency. Both

the men and women have fair complexions and are good-looking. Most of them clothe themselves in silk, owing to the great quantity of that fabric produced in the district of Kinsay, in addition to the huge supplies imported from other provinces. They eat all kinds of flesh, even that of dogs and other unclean animals, which nothing would persuade a Christian to eat.

Since the Great Khan occupied the city he has issued a regulation that each of the twelve thousand bridges should be guarded by twelve watchmen, for any contingency, in case any one should be so rash as to plot treason or insurrection against him. Each guard is provided with a hollow instrument of wood and a metal basin, and a time-keeper by means of which the hours of the day or night can be ascertained. When the first hour of the night is past, the sentry strikes one beat on the wooden instrument and also on the metal basin, and in this way the time is announced to the city. At the end of the second hour, two strokes are given, and so on progressively, the number of strokes increasing with the number of hours, the guard keeping wide awake throughout and always on the alert. In the morning again, from the rising of the sun, the guard strikes hour after hour, exactly as he did during the night.

Some of the watchmen patrol the quarter, to

see if any light or fire is burning after the lawful hours. If they find any, they mark the door, and in the morning the occupier of that house is summoned before the magistrate, and if he cannot give a good excuse he is punished. Also if any one is found going about the streets at a suspicious hour, he is arrested, and in the morning he is brought to trial before the magistrate. Similarly, if in the daytime any poor cripple is found, who is unable to work for his livelihood, he is taken to one of the hospitals, of which there are many founded and liberally endowed by the ancient kings. Should he be capable of doing work, he is obliged to take up some trade or other. If the watchmen see any house catch fire they immediately beat on the wooden instrument mentioned above in order to raise the alarm. This summons all the watchmen from the other bridges, who help to extinguish it and to save the goods of the merchants or others, either by removing them to the stone safety towers already spoken of, or by putting them in boats and taking them over to the islands in the lake. For no citizen dare leave his house at night, or come near the fire except the owners of the property, and those of the watchmen who come to help, of whom there will be one or two thousand at the least!

. There is a raised plot of ground in the city,

on which stands a tower which gives warning of outbreaks of fire. A wooden sounding board for this purpose hangs at the summit, and whenever fire breaks out, or there is any disturbance, the guard stationed there strikes on it with a mallet, and the sound is heard to a great distance.

All the streets of the city are paved with stones or bricks, as indeed are all the highways throughout Manzi, so that one can travel to every part of it without the least difficulty. But for this, travelling would not be so easy in these regions, because the country is so very low-lying that immediately after rain the roads become totally unfit for use, owing to the mud. As the Great Khan's couriers cannot ride at the proper speed over the pavement, one side of the road is left unpaved for their convenience and use. The main street of the city is also paved with stones and bricks, and is laid out in two parallel lines of ten paces wide on either side, leaving a space in the middle which is covered with fine gravel, under which run arched drains for conveying rain water into the canals, so that the road is always dry.

The city of Kinsay has about three thousand baths, the water for which is supplied by springs. These are hot baths, and the people take such delight in bathing that they visit them several times a month. The citizens are very particular

about their bodily cleanliness. These public baths are the finest and largest in the world, so that even a hundred persons can bathe in them simultaneously.

The sea lies within twenty-five miles of the city, at a place called Kan-pu, where there is a fine port, frequented by ships bringing merchandise from India and other foreign parts. The great river which flows past Kinsay forms this harbour. Boats ply on the river, and can come up as far as the city itself.

When the Great Khan brought the province of Manzi under his sway, he divided it into nine parts, and constituted each of them a kingdom. Over each of these kingdoms he appointed a viceroy, who had to render an annual report to him regarding the amount of revenue and other matters pertaining to his jurisdiction. One of these viceroys has his capital in the City of Kinsay. He rules over a hundred and forty large and wealthy cities. This is no exaggeration, for the country of Manzi is so big that there are no fewer than twelve hundred large cities in it, not to speak of a considerable number of towns and villages. In each of these cities the Great Khan keeps a garrison, the size of which varies according to the requirements of each place; the smallest city has a thousand men, while in others the force may range from ten thousand to thirty

thousand. The Great Khan's troops are therefore very numerous. They are not all Tartars, for many are drawn from the province of Cathay and are also excellent soldiers. These are usually drafted into the infantry, not the cavalry.

Everything relating to this city is on such a vast scale that any statement of figures would be thought an exaggeration. Indeed, the Great Khan's annual revenues from his kingdom are so great that it is not easy to set them down in figures, nor would they be believed if they were.

As soon as a child is born it is the custom for the parents to make a note of the day and the hour, and the planet and sign under which it was born; so that every one among them knows the date of his birth. When any one intends to travel he consults the astrologers, in order to find out whether he will meet with good luck or otherwise. Should they give an unfavourable reply, the journey is postponed to such a time as they may recommend. These astrologers are very learned and skilful in their profession, and often what they say comes to pass, so the people have great faith in them.

It is customary to cremate the dead. When any one dies, his friends and relations observe the rites of mourning for him. They dress themselves in garments of hemp, and follow the funeral procession to the cremation ground. The

procession is attended throughout its course by music on various instruments and the singing of hymns. When it reaches the burning-ground, the mourners throw into the fire great quantities of pieces of parchment on which are painted representations of caparisoned horses, male and female slaves, camels, armour, clothes embroidered with gold, and money, to be burned along with the dead body. They believe that, if they do so, the dead person will possess and enjoy all these treasures and conveniences in the other world.

There are in Kinsay one hundred and sixty *tomans* of fires, that is to say, one hundred and sixty *tomans* of houses. As a *toman* is equal to ten thousand, it follows that the total number of houses is one million six hundred thousand. A great many of these are really palatial buildings. There is only one church in the city, which belongs to the Nestorian Christians.

Every father of a family, and every house-keeper, has to write on the door of his house his own name, the name of his wife, and the names of his children, his slaves, and all the inmates of his house, in addition to the number of animals that he keeps. If any one in the family dies, then the name of that person is struck off; but if a child is born its name is added to the list. By this means the Emperor is enabled to know the exact number of the inhabitants of the city.

The same system also obtains in the provinces of both Manzi and Cathay. Similarly, every keeper of an inn has to keep a separate register of the names and other particulars of those travellers who happen to visit his inn, noting down the names and surnames, as well as the day and month of their arrival and departure. This regulation supplies the ruler with information regarding those who enter or leave his kingdom. There is no doubt that such an arrangement is both wise and provident.

The city is so situated that it has on the one side a lake of fresh and very clear water and on the other a very big river. The river water is diverted into a number of canals, which run through every quarter of the city, carrying away all refuse and discharging it into the lake, from which again it issues and ultimately flows into the sea. While these canals contribute greatly to the general purity of the atmosphere, they also make it possible for one to reach all parts of the city by water, as well as by way of the streets. The streets and canals are both wide enough to allow carts and boats respectively to pass freely to and fro, to convey the necessary supplies to the inhabitants.

On the opposite side the city is shut in by a very wide channel, about forty miles in length, full of water that comes from the river mentioned

above. This channel was made by the ancient kings of the country, in order to carry off the overflow of the river during times of flood. It also acts as a means of defence, for the earth dug out from it has been thrown on the inner side, so that it makes a kind of mound all round the city.

There are ten principal market-places, besides numberless shops, in various parts of the city. Each of them is half a mile square, with the main street, which is forty paces in width, running along the front straight from one end of the city to the other, over numbers of convenient and easily accessible bridges. These markets are situated four miles apart from each other. Similarly, parallel to the main street, but at the back of the market-places, there runs a very big canal, on the nearer bank of which are built great stone warehouses, in which the merchants from India and other foreign countries store their goods, so that they may be within easy reach of the market. The markets which are held on three days in every week, in each of these squares, attract from forty to fifty thousand people, who bring every kind of commodity for sale. There is always an abundance of game of all kinds, such as roebucks, red deer, fallow deer, hares, rabbits, partridges, pheasants, francolins, quails, fowls, capons, besides an inexhaustible supply of ducks and geese ; for so many of these

are bred and reared on the lake that for a Venetian silver groat one may buy a couple of geese and four ducks. Then there are also the shambles, where the larger animals are slaughtered, such as calves, oxen, kids, and lambs, the flesh of which is eaten by people of wealth and high rank.

These markets have all kinds of vegetables and fruits on sale every day, and among the latter must be mentioned certain pears of extraordinary size, weighing up to ten pounds each, the pulp of which is as white and fragrant as a sweetmeat. There are also peaches in their season, both yellow and white, and of a delicious flavour.

Neither grapes nor wine are produced in the country, but very good raisins and wines are imported from abroad. The natives, however, do not esteem wine greatly, being accustomed to their own liquor, which is prepared from rice and spices. A vast quantity of fish is brought up the river every day from the sea, which is twenty-five miles distant, and there is also a plentiful supply of fresh-water fish from the lake, where the fishermen, who have no other occupation, are always at work. These fish are of various kinds, according to the season, and, owing to the amount of the city's refuse which is carried into the lake, they are of remarkable size and flavour. Anyone seeing the amount of fish, on sale in the market.

would think it impossible that it could ever be sold ; and yet it will all be disposed of in a few hours, so great is the number of citizens accustomed to good living. Some of them, indeed, eat both fish and flesh at the same meal.

All the ten market-places are surrounded by tall houses, beneath which there are shops where every kind of craft is followed, and all sorts of goods are on sale, including spices, jewels and pearls. Some of these shops sell nothing but the native wine made of rice and spices, which is always freshly prepared and very cheap.

Certain streets are occupied by the physicians and astrologers, who likewise act as teachers of reading and writing. People belonging to an endless variety of other callings also have their places of business near the square. In each of these market-places there are two large palaces, facing each other, where the officers appointed by the Great Khan inquire into any disputes that arise between merchants or other inhabitants of the district, and give their decision. These officers have also to see every day that the guards are at their posts on the bridges within their jurisdiction, and to punish any absentees as they think fit.

On either side of the main street which, as has already been stated, extends from one end of the city to the other, stand houses and great

palaces, with their gardens, and in between these are the homes of the tradesmen engaged in their different callings. There are such multitudes of people going from one place to another, at all hours of the day, about their various businesses, that you would think it impossible to provide enough food for them all, unless you had seen the throngs of customers in the squares on every market-day, and all the merchants who bring provisions in by land and water, and sell out their whole supply. By way of an example of the amount that the city consumes, let us take pepper, from which you will be able to obtain some idea of the quantities of food, such as meat, wine, and groceries, that have to be provided for the whole population. One of the Great Khan's customs officers said that forty-three loads of pepper alone were brought in and consumed in Kinsay every day, a load being equivalent to two hundred and forty-three pounds.

The houses of the inhabitants are well built and elaborately finished. The people take such a delight in decorative art, painting, and architecture that they spend astonishing sums of money on anything of that kind.

The natives of the city are pacific by nature, both as a result of their education and from the example of their former kings, who were also of a peaceful disposition. They do not know how to

handle weapons, and they do not keep any in their houses. One never hears of any feuds, or noisy quarrels, or disputes of any sort among them. Both in their business dealings and as regards their products they are thoroughly honest and truthful. They show such good feeling and neighbourly affection towards one another that you would take the people who live in the same street to be members of a single family. This friendliness and intimacy leads to no suspicion and jealousy as regards their womenfolk. They treat their women with the greatest respect, and any one who dared to make advances to a married woman would be considered an infamous wretch. They give a cordial welcome to the foreigners who visit their city for trade purposes, and invite them to their houses and entertain them in the most gracious manner, and give them their best assistance and advice in connection with their business. On the other hand, they hate the sight of soldiers, especially those of the Great Khan's garrisons, to whom, they consider, they owe the loss of their native kings and lords.

There are a great number of pleasure boats, or barges, of all sizes upon the lake of which we have already spoken. They will hold ten, fifteen, twenty, or more persons, and are fifteen to twenty paces in length, and of considerable width, with flat bottoms so that there is no danger of their

capsizing. Anyone who wishes to go out on a pleasure trip with a party of friends may hire out one of these barges, which are always kept completely furnished with tables and chairs and everything else that is necessary for an entertainment. The flat roof forms the upper deck, on which the crew stand and push the barge along in the required direction with poles, the lake being only two paces deep. The under-side of the roof and the rest of the interior is covered with ornamental paintings in bright colours, and there are windows all round that may be shut or opened, so that the company sitting at table may enjoy the beautiful and varied scenery on both sides as they float along. Indeed, a pleasure trip on this lake is a much more delightful recreation than anything possible on land, for the city stretches all along one side of the lake, and from the distance the people in the barges command a full view of the city in all its grandeur and beauty, with its innumerable palaces, temples, monasteries, and gardens, full of lofty trees, running down to the shore. There are always numbers of other boats on the water, carrying similar parties, for, when the business of the day is over, the citizens are very fond of going out with the ladies of their household to enjoy themselves either on these barges or in driving about the city in carriages. As the

barges provide the citizens with one kind of amusement on the lake, so these carriages provide another kind in the city. You will see an endless procession of them going up and down the principal thoroughfare of the city. They are long, covered vehicles, with curtains and cushions, and will hold six persons; and they are in constant demand by ladies and gentlemen who are going out to enjoy themselves. People drive out in them to certain gardens, where they are entertained by the owners in pavilions specially erected for this purpose, returning home at night in the same carriages.

The sumptuous palace of the Emperor of Manzi who fled from his kingdom also stands in this city. It is the biggest palace in the world, the grounds in which it stands being ten miles in circuit. The grounds are completely surrounded by a high wall, and contain some of the loveliest and most delightful gardens to be seen anywhere on earth, which yield an abundance of the finest fruits. There are also numerous fountains, and lakes full of fish. The palace stands in the centre, and is an imposing building. It has twenty large and splendid halls, one of which, more spacious than the rest, is intended for a dining-hall. The walls and ceilings are all decorated and painted in gold, depicting historical and other subjects. The effect is really magnificent,

for wherever one looks one sees nothing but pictures in gold. Besides these halls the palace has a thousand fine chambers, all painted and embellished in gold and various colours.

The grounds of the palace are divided into three enclosures. The one in the middle is entered by a lofty gateway, on each side of which stand huge pavilions, the roofs of these being supported by pillars painted and worked in gold and the richest azure. The chief pavilion stands facing the gateway, and is larger than the others. It is also ornamented in similar fashion, the pillars gilded, the ceiling decorated with splendid gilded carvings, and the walls artistically painted with scenes from the histories of former kings.

On certain days which were sacred to the gods, King Facfur used to hold his court in great splendour and give a feast to his principal nobles and officers, and the rich manufacturers of the city of Kinsay. On such occasions these pavilions used to supply ample room for ten thousand persons at a time, sitting at table. The festival lasted ten or twelve days, and the magnificence displayed by the guests in their raiment of silk and gold covered with precious stones furnished a spectacle of astonishing and unbelievable splendour; for they vied with one another in the sumptuousness of their dress and appointments. Behind the chief pavilion which faces the great

gateway, there is a wall with a passage leading to the inner precincts of the palace. On entering this, one comes to another large building in the form of a cloister, surrounded by a portico supported by pillars, from which open various apartments for the king and queen, elaborately painted and ornamented like the outer walls mentioned above. From this cloister one enters a covered corridor, six paces in width, and of great length, extending as it does to the edge of the lake. On either side of this corridor are ten courts, in the form of long cloisters, with colonnades all round; and in each of these courts or cloisters there are fifty chambers, with their respective gardens. These were inhabited by a thousand young ladies, who were in the service of the king. He would sometimes go for a voyage on the lake accompanied by the queen and some of these young women, in boats all canopied with silk, either for pleasure or to pay a visit to the idol-temples on the shore.

The other two divisions of the palace enclosure are laid out in groves, lakes, beautiful gardens planted with fruit-trees, and preserves for all sorts of animals, such as roes, red deer, fallow deer, hares and rabbits. Sometimes the king would order his dinner to be provided in one of these groves, where the lofty trees with their thick foliage afforded shade, and be waited upon

by his attendant maidens. He passed his time in idle amusements of this kind without paying the least heed to military affairs, with the result that the Great Khan found him an easy victim and hurled him ignominiously from his throne.

SAKYA-MUNI BURKHAN

THERE is in the Island of Ceylon a very high mountain, which is so steep and precipitous that it would be almost impossible to climb to the top if several massive iron chains had not been fixed up along the ascent, with the aid of which people can reach the summit. Tradition has it that on this mountain is to be found the tomb of Adam, the first man ; at least, that is the account given by the Saracens. The Idolaters, however, say that it is the sepulchre of Sakya-Muni Burkhan, before whose time there were no idols. They revere him as the most faultless of men, indeed (by their standards) a great saint, and the first person in whose image idols were made.

He was, the story goes, the son of a great and wealthy king. His holiness was such that he would pay no heed to worldly matters and would not consent to succeed his father on the throne. When his father saw that his son would not become king, nor even take part in public affairs, he was deeply grieved. At first he tried to tempt him with all sorts of promises, and offered to crown him king at once and to surrender all power into his hands. But the son



Sakya-Muni Burkhan.

would not be persuaded, and the King was greatly perturbed, especially as he had no other son to whom he could bequeath the kingdom on his death. After much consideration, the King had a splendid palace built for his son, and filled it with the most beautiful young women, who were to wait on him to sing and dance to him, and entertain him in every possible manner, in order to allure him, towards worldly pleasures. But it was all in vain, for nothing could shake the young prince's resolution, and he led a purer and holier life than ever.

He had been so sheltered from the world that he had never been beyond the walls of the palace, and so he had never seen a dead person, nor even any one who was not in perfect health, for his father never allowed any one who was either old or infirm to enter his presence. It happened one day, however, that the young prince went out riding, and came upon the body of a dead man by the roadside. The sight gave him a great shock, as he had never seen anything of the kind before. He immediately asked his companions what it was, and they told him that it was a dead man. "What," said the prince, "do all men die?" "Yes, it is ever so," they replied. The young man said nothing more, but rode on in a very pensive mood. When they were a good distance further on he

caught sight of a very old man, who was so weak with age that he could not walk and had lost every tooth in his head. When he saw this the prince asked those about him what it meant and why the old man could not walk. They replied that old age had bereft him of the use of his limbs as well as his teeth. When the prince had thus learned the truth about death and old age, he resolved not to remain any longer in this evil world, but to go forth and seek Him who is undying, and who had been his creator.

So one night he fled secretly from the palace, and made his way to this lofty and trackless mountain. Here he spent the rest of his days, leading a life of holiness and severe privation, observing strict abstinence as though he were a Christian. Indeed, if he had only been a Christian, he would have been a great saint and disciple of Jesus Christ, so good and pure a life did he lead. When he died the people found his body and took it to his father. When the King saw before him the corpse of the son whom he had loved more dearly than himself, he was almost mad with grief. He caused an image of his son to be made of gold and precious stones, and ordered his subjects to worship it. The people declared the dead prince to be a god, and that is their belief to this day.

They say also that he has died fourscore and

four times. He died the first time as a man, and came back to life as an ox; then he died as an ox, and came back to life as a horse, and so on, each time returning to life in the form of some animal, until he had died eighty-four times. When he died the last time, they say he became a god. The people regard him as the chief of all their gods. They say that the image made of him was the first idol the Idolaters ever worshipped, and that it was from this that all their other idols came into existence. All these events took place in the island of Ceylon.

The Idolaters go on pilgrimage to this mountain, travelling long distances and displaying great devotion, just as Christians go to the shrine of St. James in Galicia. They maintain that the tomb on the mountain is that of the prince, as related above, and that the teeth, the hair, and the dish, which are still preserved there, belong to Sakya-Muni Burkhan, or Sakya-Muni the Saint. The Saracens, who also go there on pilgrimage in great numbers, hold that it is the tomb of Adam, the father of the human race, and that the teeth, hair, and dish, belonged to him.

M A A B A R

LEAVING the island of Ceylon, and sailing about sixty miles in a westerly direction, one reaches the great province of Maabar, which is called India the Greater. It is the finest of all the Indies and is on the mainland. Five kings, who are blood brothers, reign over this province. The part nearest to Ceylon is governed by Sundhara Pandi Devar, who is a crowned king. His kingdom is famous for its wonderful pearls, and this is how they are obtained.

The sea here forms a gulf between the island of Ceylon and the mainland, and the water is nowhere more than ten or twelve fathoms deep, and in some places not more than two fathoms. The pearl-fishers take their boats, large and small, and go out into this gulf, where they stay from the beginning of April till the middle of May. They go first to a spot called Patlam, and from here they sail out sixty miles into the gulf. They then cast anchor and move from their large vessels into small boats. The numerous pearl-dealers who have come out, form separate companies, each of which employs a number of pearl-divers on a regular wage, engaging them for the whole of April and half of May. First of all, a

tenth of whatever they obtain has to be paid to the King as his royalty. They have also to pay one-twentieth of whatever they take to the men who charm the great fishes, and know how to prevent them from doing injury to the divers while they are collecting the oysters under water. These fish-charmers are called Brahmans; their charm lasts only for a single day, for at night they dissolve the spell, so that the fishes can do any mischief they please. These Brahmans also know how to charm beasts and birds and every living creature. When the divers have got into the small boats, they plunge into the water and dive to the bottom, perhaps at a depth of from four to twelve fathoms, and remain there as long as they can hold their breath. When they have gathered as many as they can of the oysters in whose shells the pearls are found, they put them into the net bags tied round their waists, and ascend to the surface with them, and then dive again. When they can hold their breath no longer, they come up again, and after a short interval dive in once more. They keep this up all day. Pearls of every kind, large or small, are found inside the shells, sticking in the flesh of the oyster. Great quantities of pearls are obtained in this manner; indeed it is from here that the world obtains its supplies. The ruler of this kingdom derives a very large revenue and

quantities of treasure from the payments due to him on these pearls. No more oysters are to be found after the middle of May. They are, however, still obtainable at a point some three hundred miles from this spot, but that is in September and the first half of October.

In the whole province of Maabar there is not a single tailor who could cut a coat or stitch it, because everybody goes naked except for a scrap of cloth worn for decency's sake. This applies to men and women, rich and poor alike, and even to the King himself, apart from one detail. The King goes as naked as the rest, only he has a finer loincloth and wears round his neck a necklace entirely composed of precious stones, such as rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and so forth, which is of immense value. He also wears a fine silk thread strung with a hundred and four large and valuable pearls and rubies, hanging from his neck down his chest. People say that the reason for this cord and the number of the jewels is that the King has to say a hundred and four prayers to his idols every day, both morning and evening. This religious practice was followed by all his royal ancestors, who bequeathed him the string of pearls in order that he might do likewise. The daily prayer consists of these words, *Pacauta! Pacauta! Pacauta!* repeated a hundred and four times.

The King also wears on each arm three gold bracelets set with pearls of great value, in addition to similar anklets on his legs, as well as rings on his toes. What he wears on his person in the way of gold and gems and pearls is worth more than the ransom of a city. It is not surprising that he should do so, for he has immense hoards of such things, and besides they are all the produce of his own kingdom. Moreover, no one may take a pearl weighing more than half a *saggio* out of the kingdom, unless he manages to smuggle it out secretly. This regulation was made because the King wishes to reserve all such pearls for himself, and thus the number he possesses is almost beyond belief. Again, he issues a proclamation throughout his kingdom several times a year to the effect that if any one who owns a pearl or precious stone of great value will bring it to him, he will pay for it twice what it cost. Everyone is pleased to do so, and in this way the King obtains them for himself, paying every person what he asks.

The King always has a number of knights in attendance on his person. They ride with him, and accompany him everywhere, and are entrusted with great authority in his realm. These knights are known as the King's Trusty Lieges. When the king dies, and his dead body is placed on the funeral pyre for cremation, these

Lieges throw themselves into the fire round the corpse, and allow themselves to be burnt along with their master. They do so, they say, because they have been his comrades in this world, and ought also to bear him company in the other world.

When a king dies, none of his children dares to lay hands on his treasure, because they argue that it is their duty to follow their father's example and to amass for themselves as much as he did. As a result of this attitude, an immense treasure has been accumulated by successive kings.

No horses are bred in this country, and so a large part of its wealth has to be expended in the purchase of horses. Merchants from Kish, Ormuz, Dhafar, Sohar, and Aden collect large numbers of chargers and other horses and bring them for sale to the dominions of this King and his four royal brothers. A horse fetches five hundred *saggi* of gold, equal to more than a hundred marks of silver, and vast numbers of them are sold here every year. In fact, the King of this country is ready to purchase more than two thousand horses every year, and so are his brother Kings. The reason for this great demand for horses is that they die off so rapidly that by the end of a year there are hardly a hundred of them left alive. This is because the

people of the country have not the least knowledge of how to treat a horse, in addition to which there are no farriers among them. The foreign horse-dealers not only do not bring any farriers with them, but also take steps to see that no farrier goes there, in case it should interfere with the sale of horses which brings them such enormous profits every year. The horses are brought by sea in ships.

One of the customs of the country is worthy of mention. When a man has been condemned to death for any crime, he has the right to declare that he is ready to sacrifice himself in honour of some particular idol, and the government then grants him permission to do so. His relations and friends then place him in a cart, give him twelve knives, and take him in procession through the city, loudly proclaiming: "This brave man is going to sacrifice himself in honour of such and such an idol." When they reach the place of execution, the condemned man takes one of the knives given to him and thrusts it into one of his arms, crying: "I give up my life for the love of so-and-so!" Then he takes another knife and sticks into the other arm. Next he runs a third knife into his body, and so on, until he expires. When he is dead his relations take away the body and cremate it with great rejoicings. Many women also, when their husbands

die and are placed on the funeral pyre, throw themselves into the flames and allow themselves to be burnt with the body; and such women are universally praised.

The people are Idolaters, and most of them worship the ox, because of the high virtues they say it possesses. Nothing would persuade them to eat beef, nor would they on any account kill an ox. But there is a particular class of people called *Govis*, who are very willing to eat beef, though they dare not kill the animal; if an ox dies, however, whether by a natural death or otherwise, the people of this class eat it.

It is also customary for the houses in this country to be smeared all over with cow-dung. Again, everybody, great and small, king and lords included, sits on the ground, not upon a seat, for they say that it is the most honourable way of sitting, since we are all sprung from the earth and must return to it again, so no one can show the earth too much honour, and no one should despise it.

As regards the class known as *Govis*, nothing would induce them to enter the church where the body of St. Thomas the Apostle rests, which is in a certain city of the province of Maabar. Indeed, even if twenty or thirty men were to seize one of these *Govis* and try to hold him where the Apostle's body lies buried,

they could not do it, so great is the power of the Saint, who met his death at the hands of this race.

No wheat grows in this country, which produces only rice.

The people go into battle quite naked, with only their lances and shields, but they are anything but warlike. They will not kill either beast or bird, or any living creature, and the Saracens, or others who are not of their own religion, have to act as butchers to supply them with any meat they may require.

It is the practice of both men and women to wash the whole body twice every day, and those who do not do so would be looked upon as heretics. They use their right hand only in eating, and would not on any account touch their food with their left hand. They use their right hand for all clean and honourable work, reserving the left for dirty or disagreeable tasks. They always use drinking vessels to drink from; each person has his own, and no one will make use of anyone else's cup. When they drink they do not put the vessel to their lips, but hold it up and let the liquid pour down into the mouth. No one would for any consideration allow the cup to touch his lips, or let a stranger take a drink from it. If the stranger has no cup of his own they pour the liquid into his hands, from which he drinks as from a cup.

These people are very strict in meting out punishment to criminals, and equally rigid in their abstinence from drinking wine. It is, indeed, one of their regulations that wine-drinkers and seafaring men are never to be accepted as sureties. They consider that a seafaring man is bound to be an utter rogue, and that his testimony is of no value.

They have the following custom with regard to debts. If a creditor has repeatedly asked his debtor for payment of the amount due to him, and has been put off time after time with false promises, he may, if he can succeed in doing so, draw a circle round the debtor, from which the latter must not move until he has satisfied the claim, or given adequate security for the amount. If he dares to leave the circle without doing so, he is sentenced to death as an offender against right and justice. When he was in this country, on his way home, the author himself witnessed a case of this nature. The King himself owed a sum of money to a foreign merchant, and though the claim had often been presented, the merchant had never received anything but promises. One day, when the King was riding through the city, the merchant seized his opportunity and drew a circle round both the King and his horse. On perceiving this, the King stopped, and would go no further; and he did not stir from the spot



The merchant drew a circle round the King and his horse.

until he had satisfied the merchant's claim. When the bystanders saw this they were full of admiration, and said that the King was indeed a most just ruler, since he thus himself submitted to the requirements of the law.

The heat of the country is sometimes incredibly great. There is rain only for three months in the year, in June, July and August. Indeed, but for the rain in these three months, which refreshes the earth and cools the air, the drought would be too great for life to be possible.

There are many experts in what they call the science of physiognomy, by which they can read a man's character and qualities at a glance. They also know the significance of meeting certain birds or beasts, for they pay more attention to such omens than any other people in the world. For instance, if a man is going along the road, and happens to hear someone sneeze, he goes on his way if he regards it as a good omen; if not, he stays where he is for a while, or perhaps abandons his journey altogether.

When a child is born the parents take a record of its nativity, that is to say, the hour and day, the month, and the age of the moon. They observe this custom because every act of theirs is regulated by astrology, and by the advice of diviners who are skilled in sorcery and magic and geomancy, and other similar unholy arts.

As soon as boys attain the age of thirteen, their parents send them away from home, and do not support them any longer. They consider that the boys are then of an age when they can earn their own livelihood in trade, so they send them off with the equivalent of some twenty or twenty-four groats. These boys run about all day from place to place, buying and selling. During the pearl-fishing season, they go down to the beach and purchase from the fishermen or others five or six pearls, according to their means, and take these to the merchants, who stay indoors to shelter from the sun, and say to them: "These have cost us so much; give us whatever profit you think fit." The merchants give them something over the cost price by way of profit. They deal in many other articles in the same way, so that they learn to become keen and skilful business men. They take their food to their mothers every day to be cooked and served to them, but they do not have a morsel at their fathers' expense.

In this province, and indeed throughout India, the birds and beasts are quite unlike those of Europe, with the exception of the quails, which resemble ours. All the others are totally different. For example, the bats of that country are as large as hawks, and the hawks are as black as crows, much larger than ours, and very swift and sure in flight.

Another peculiar thing is that they feed their horses on boiled rice and boiled meat, as well as other kinds of cooked food. This explains why their horses die off so quickly.

There are certain temples containing gods and goddesses to which many young girls are dedicated by their fathers and mothers, who present them to those idols for which they cherish the greatest devotion. When the priests of a convent celebrate a festival in honour of their idol, they send for all the maidens who are so dedicated, and they come to sing and dance before the idol amid great festivities. They also bring food for the idol—that is to say, the women prepare dishes of meat and other delicacies and set the meal down before the idol and leave it there while they go on with the dancing and singing and revelry for about as long a time as a great lord would require to eat his dinner. They believe that by that time the spirit of the idol has partaken of the food, so they take the victuals away and eat them themselves with great enjoyment. The girls perform this ceremony several times a year, until they get married.

According to the priests, the reason for summoning the young women to these feasts is that the god is annoyed and angry with the goddess, and will have nothing to do with her. They say

that if peace were not restored between them, everything would go wrong with their worshippers, on whom they would never again bestow their favour and blessings.

The beds used in this country are made of very light cane-work, so contrived that when the occupant has got in and is going to sleep, he can draw the curtains round him by pulling a cord. This is done to keep out the tarantulas, which can inflict terrible bites, as well as fleas and other vermin, while at the same time it allows the air to enter, which is essential to mitigate the excessive heat. It is not every one who can afford this luxury, but only persons of rank and means. Other people usually sleep in the open streets.

MOTUPALLI

ABOUT five hundred miles north of Maabar is the kingdom of Motupalli. This was formerly ruled by a king, but since his death, nearly forty years ago, it has been under the queen, his widow, a woman of great ability. So deep was her love for her husband that she would never marry again. During these forty years of her reign, she has governed the kingdom quite as well as her husband had done, perhaps better; and as she has always sought to secure justice, equity and peace, her people love her better than any king or queen in all their history.

The people of this country are Idolaters, and are not subject to any other state. They live on flesh, rice, and milk.

In this kingdom diamonds are found, in the neighbourhood of certain high mountains. During the heavy winter rains, the waters come rushing in great torrents down the mountain-sides. When the rains are over and the waters have subsided, the people search the beds of these torrents for diamonds, and find quantities of them. There are also plenty to be found in the mountains in summer, but the heat is so intense that it is almost impossible to get here, and not a drop of

water can be obtained. Besides this, the mountains abound in large serpents, in astonishing numbers, as well as other vermin, also by reason of the excessive heat. The snakes are the most venomous in existence, so that any one who ventures into that region runs dreadful risks, for many have fallen victims to these reptiles.

There are great valleys in these mountains, of such a depth that there is no means of reaching the bottom. Accordingly the men who go in quest of the diamonds take with them several pieces of flesh, and throw them down into the bottom of the valley. Flocks of white eagles haunt the mountains, preying upon the serpents there, and when these eagles see the pieces of meat thrown down, they pounce upon them and carry them away to some rocky summit and begin to tear them to pieces. As soon as the men who are on the watch see that the eagles have settled, they raise a loud noise to drive them away. Having frightened the birds off in this manner, they recover the pieces of meat, and find in them the diamonds which stuck to them at the bottom of the valley. Diamonds are present in astonishing profusion in the depths of these valleys, but no one can get down there; and even supposing anyone could do so, he would only be devoured at once by the multitudes of serpents at the bottom.



The mountains of Motupalli.

There is also another way of securing the diamonds. The people go to the nests where the eagles roost, and discover in their droppings many diamonds which the birds swallowed while eating the meat dropped down into the valleys. Again, when the eagles are captured, diamonds are often found in their stomachs.

These are three different ways in which these precious stones are obtained. Mottupalli is the only country that produces them, and here they are both plentiful and large. Those that are brought to Europe are only the refuse, so to speak, of the bigger and finer stones, for the pick

of the diamonds, as well as the largest pearls, are all taken to the Great Khan and to other kings and princes of those regions. It is they, in fact, who possess the richest treasures in the world.

In this country also they weave most delicate and costly fabrics—as fine, indeed, as a spider's web! There is no king or queen on earth but might be proud to wear them.

The people have also the biggest sheep in the world, and possess all the necessities of life in great abundance.

KING KAIDU'S DAUGHTER

KING Kaidu had a daughter called Ai-yaruk, which, in the Tartar language, means "The Shining Moon." This damsel was very beautiful, and also so strong and brave that in all her father's realm of Great Turkey there was no man who could excel her in feats of strength. In every trial she showed that she possessed greater strength than any man of them all.

The King, her father, often wished her to take a husband, but she refused. She vowed that she would never marry until she met a man who should overcome her in every trial of strength; he and none other should be her husband. Her father saw how determined she was, and gave his formal consent, according to their custom, that she might marry when and whom she pleased. She was so tall and muscular, so sturdy and yet shapely, that she almost resembled a giantess. She had her challenge proclaimed throughout all the kingdoms, stating that anyone who came to pit himself against her must agree to her conditions, which were that if she vanquished him, he should forfeit to her one hundred horses, but if he vanquished her, she would accept him for her husband. Many a

young prince came to contend with her, but she defeated them all, and she won more than a hundred thousand horses in this fashion.

In 1280 A.D. a noble young wooer, the son of a rich and powerful king, a man of great prowess, courage, and physical strength, who had learnt of the princess's challenge, came to compete with her in the hope of vanquishing her and winning her for his wife. He was very eager to do so, for the young princess was exceedingly beautiful. He himself was young, handsome, and fearless, and so strong in every way that no one in all his father's kingdom could rival him. So he came, full of confidence, bringing with him one thousand horses, to be forfeited if he lost to her, though he had such faith in his own powers that he felt sure he would defeat her.

King Kaidu and the Queen, his wife, privately implored their daughter to let herself be vanquished, for they were anxious that this prince should be her husband, since he possessed such splendid qualities, and was the son of a powerful king. But she replied that she would never allow herself to be beaten if she could help it; if, however, he did overcome her in the contest, then she would gladly be his wife, according to the terms of the wager, but not otherwise.



The throwing of the Prince.

So a day was appointed, and a vast gathering was present to see the contest, which was to take place in the hall of the palace in the presence of the King and Queen. When the company had assembled, the King's daughter was the first to appear, dressed in a tight jerkin of silk and gold, and then came the young prince in a silk jerkin, both of them very beautiful to behold. When they had taken up their respective positions in the middle of the hall, they grappled with each other and began to wrestle and for a long while neither could get the better of the other. At last, however, the King's daughter succeeded in throwing her opponent heavily to the floor of the palace. Great was the discomfiture of the prince when he found himself lying there with the girl standing over him. He got up at once and departed with his retinue without more ado, returning to his kingdom full of humiliation and anger because he, who had never met his equal among men, had now been worsted by a girl! His thousand horses were left behind him.

King Kaidu and the Queen were disappointed and angry, for they would have been glad if the prince had been successful. From this time forward the King never went on a campaign without taking his daughter with him. He was always glad to do so, moreover, because there was not a knight in his whole host who could

accomplish such feats of arms as she performed. She would leave her father's side, dash into the ranks of the enemy, and pouncing on some warrior like a hawk upon a bird, bear him back with her to her father.

NOTES

THE MISERLY CALIPH

The City of Bagdad was built about 765 A.D., by Abu Jafar-al-Mansur, second Caliph of the Abbasite dynasty, and it continued to be the residence of his successors until the death of the last Caliph, in 1258 A.D., when it was taken by the Moghuls.

It was the seat of Arabic learning. Those who have read *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments* will associate Bagdad with the celebrated Harun-al-Raschid. The Caliph of that name died long before Marco Polo visited the city. The stories related in *The Arabian Nights* were commonly believed by the people, as readers of Marco's book will know.

Marco Polo calls Bagdad "Bandas" in the original text, this being the name used in his day.

Saracens.—A general name for nomads of the Syro-Arabian desert; Arabs or Moslems of the time of the Crusades.

Year of Our Lord.—1255 is the year given in the Latin text. The original French texts give the date as 1275, which is manifestly wrong, since it was not until 1255 that Hulagu crossed the Oxus.

Levant.—Persia and countries east of the Caspian Sea, so called because the sun appeared to rise there (from the French verb *lever*, to rise).

Hulagu.—Polo spells this name “Alaü.” Jenghiz Khan’s grandson, who ruled under Kublai Khan over Persia, Armenia and Mesopotamia.

Great Khan.—The Emperor of the Mongols, Kublai Khan, a grandson of the terrible Jenghiz Khan. He was held in such reverence that he was given the title of “The Lord” or “Lord of the Earth.” Ramusio spells the title variously, sometimes as “Kaan,” and sometimes as “Can.” Marco Polo always speaks of the Great Kaan, and does not give the title of Khan to any of the subordinate princes.

THE THREE KINGS OF PERSIA

This story of The Three Kings, or Magi, is apparently of Eastern origin, as it departs very materially from the Western legends. According to tradition, the Three Kings set out from Persia when they went to worship the new-born Christ at Bethlehem. After their visit to Palestine they are supposed to have returned to Persia. In the English version of the story they are usually called the Three Wise Men of the East.

Marco Polo narrates the story as it was told to him. It is a queer mixture of Christian and Parsee legends. The latter part of his account clearly refers to the ancient community of Persian fire-worshippers, now known as Parsees.

Frankincense.—Old French *franc* free, pure, and *encens*, incense. A fragrant gum resin containing volatile oil, obtained from various East Indian trees of the

genus *Boswellia*. It was highly valued by the Egyptians and other ancient peoples for embalming, fumigation, and other purposes. **Myrrh** was another aromatic gum resin greatly esteemed for its medicinal properties.

THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN

The region in which the Old Man of the Mountain lived was, according to Polo, the mountainous part of Persia, in the far north. In the time of the first Crusaders, however, some 200 years earlier, the chief of a band of murderers, one Hassan-ben-Sabah, had his fortress on Mount Lebanon, in Southern Syria. He was also known as the Old Man of the Mountain.

The drug administered to the young men whom he wished to enlist in his service was hashish and the English word "assassin" is derived from the Arabic word for "hashish-eater."

As Marco passed by the castle of the Old Man of the Mountain not long after the latter's defeat by Hulagu, it is probable that he heard a fairly accurate account of what had happened.

"Place of the Aram."—Meaning, in the Saracenic language, the place of heretics.

Aladdin.—An Ismailean prince, who was killed, after a long reign, towards the end of 1255 A.D. He was succeeded by Rukn-eddin ben Alauddin, who reigned only one year before his power was destroyed in the circumstances related by Marco Polo.

Soldiering.—The military life.

Potion.—Dose of medicine, drug.

THE TARTARS

Wands.—Slender rods or twigs.

Goshawks.—Large short-winged hawks.

Pharaoh's rats.—Probably a species of marmot, very common in Egypt, Asia Minor, and Central Asia, and sometimes called the jerboa. It is a small creature with very long hind legs, and is a remarkable jumper. It feeds on grass and roots, and its flesh is esteemed a delicacy in the countries where it lives.

Kumiz—or Koumiss, a preparation of mare's milk, brought into a state of fermentation by heat, then shaken up in a skin bag, ultimately becoming highly intoxicating. In this state it will bear keeping for several months, and is the favourite drink of the Tartars.

Vair.—The fur of a species of squirrel, much used in the fourteenth century to adorn the costly dresses of kings, nobles, and prelates.

Cuir bouilli.—French, literally “boiled hide,” leather made very hard by boiling or soaking in hot water and drying.

Game.—Wild animals and birds such as are considered worthy of pursuit by sportsmen.

Cathay.—The medieval name for Northern China.

Idolaters.—Polo uses this term to mean the followers of Buddhism.

NEW YEAR WITH THE GREAT KHAN

White garments.—The habit of regarding white as the emblem of purity and good fortune is very common

throughout the world, just as black is generally the symbol of sorrow or misfortune. During the reign of Kublai, and as long as his dynasty held the throne, white was conspicuous in the celebration of the New Year festivities; for not only did all the people put on white clothes, but white horses formed the most acceptable presents to the Emperor. When the Ming dynasty, which was native Chinese, succeeded that of the Mongols, the use of white on this occasion was prohibited, and the Chinese adopted white as the colour of mourning, as it is to this day.

Nine times nine.—Like many other peoples, the Tartars attached a mystical sense of perfection to the number nine, as being made up of three trinities or threes.

They repeat this four times.—All the editions of Marco Polo's work state that this ceremony was repeated four times. It is curious that it should be so, having regard to the Tartar reverence for the numbers three and nine. Possibly the author's memory failed him for once, or, which is also probable, the figures of an early manuscript may have been wrongly copied.

The people prostrate themselves.—This ceremony would seem to belong to the celebration of the Emperor's birthday rather than the New Year's festival.

CAMBALUC

Cambaluc.—Khan-balig, or king's palace.

Inter.—It is the general practice of the Tartars to cremate, and not to bury their dead. The Chinese, on

the other hand, are profoundly attached to the practice of burial.

Bakshis—A corruption of the Sanskrit “Bikshus”, religious mendicants, Buddhist priests.

THE GOLDEN KING AND PRESTER JOHN

Golden King.—The Manchus (Manchurians), who were rulers of North China before they were defeated by Jenghiz Khan, were called the Kin or Golden Tartars. Ki-chan was one of their imperial residences. The name of this prince is given as Dor in Ramusio's text as well as in the Italian epitome.

At war.—The Golden King was a powerful prince, whose administration was both able and just. According to tradition the fortress in which he had his residence was of extraordinary strength. His rebellion against Prester John, whose vassal he was, was due to pride.

Prester John.—Priest or Presbyter John was a legendary Asiatic potentate, of great wealth and power, whose existence was believed in by the whole of Europe in the Middle Ages. Many travellers reported that there was a mighty Christian king who ruled the country between Persia and Armenia. It is difficult, however, to discover who he really can have been. He has been identified with Ung Khan, King of the Tartar tribe of East Asia, converted to Christianity and slain in warfare with Jenghiz Khan in 1203. Modern scholars identify him with Gur Khan, founder of the empire of Black Cathay in the twelfth century. It is possible that the word ‘Gurkhan,’ passing through the mouths of

several persons, was transformed into Yochan, and this in turn into Johannes or John.

Many European potentates, and even the Pope himself, sent letters to Prester John, and tried to find him and his kingdom, but the elusive monarch was never discovered.

THE KING OF MIEN

Mien.—Chinese term for Burma.

Wanchen.—In Chinese, Yung-chang.

Nasruddin.—In Ramusio's edition the name is written as Nestardin. It is a corruption of the common Mahomedan name.

Plain of Wanchen.—This is probably the plain through which the river Irawaddy runs in its upper reaches.

THE CITY OF KINSAY

Kinsay.—King-sze, now Hangchow.

Document.—The letter from the Queen of Manzi to Bayan, Kublai's general, who conquered her kingdom.

Circuit.—The dimensions given here must not be taken too literally, even if they are to be understood as including all the suburbs, which were then numerous. In describing the size of places, Marco Polo must be understood as speaking of Chinese miles, or *li*, which are to the Italian in the proportion of three to eight. Even so, the figures given might seem exaggerated, but for the fact that the walls even of the modern city are estimated by travellers to cover 60 *li*.

Bezant.—a gold coin worth approximately ten shillings.

Lake.—The lake spoken of is the famous Si-hu, or West Lake. It is now situated outside the city, but may have been within the walls in Polo's time.

Time-keeper.—A clepsydra, or water-clock.

Kan-pu.—The seaport described here is now submerged by the encroaching bay.

River.—The Tsien-tang.

No fewer than.....—The nine provinces of south-eastern China, according to Du Halde, contain 810 cities of the first, second and third class. This number does not, however, include the provinces of Yunnan and Szechuen, which might then have belonged to Manzi.

Emperor of Manzi.—F'acfur, which is really the Arabic for emperor, is the name given by Polo. His name was actually Tu-tsong.

Weighing ten pounds.—Some parts of China do produce very large pears, but the fruit to which Polo refers are probably the huge Chinese quinces.

Peaches.—By "yellow peaches" the author probably means apricots.

Parchment.—The burning of paper representations of houses, carriages, money, and so forth is still a feature of Chinese funeral rites.

Francolins.—Partridges with bright plumage and long tails and bills.

Silver groat.—A small coin which varied in value at different periods.

Pepper.—Polo owed his information to an officer of the Customs, and it is therefore likely that the quantity of pepper mentioned in the text is only the amount imported by the city, and not necessarily consumed daily.

SAKYA-MUNI BURKHAN

Mountain.—Adam's Peak.

Sakya-Muni Burkhan.—Sakya-Muni signifies "astute sage," and *Burkhan* means, in the Tartar language, the deity. Polo spells the name as Sagamoni Borcan.

St. James.—The shrine containing the body of this saint at Santiago de Compostela in north-west Spain was one of the most famous places of pilgrimage in Europe.

Teeth.—The Dalada Malagawa temple at Kandy claims to possess one of Buddha's teeth.

MAABAR

Maabar.—Maabar was the name given by the Mahommedans in the 13th and 14th centuries to the southern part of the Coromandel coast. It is difficult to determine the exact locality of the port or city which Polo visited in the territory of the Prince whom he calls Sundhara Pandi Devar; and there is equal uncertainty regarding the identification of the Prince himself, and the family to which he belonged, though he is also mentioned by other foreign writers.

As regards the port of Maabar visited, but not named, by Marco, and at or near which his Sundhara Pandi appears to have resided, Tanjore would seem to be a more likely place than the Gulf of Mannar. The indication of its situation as being "60 miles west of Ceylon," and the special mention of the pearl fishery, are, however, difficulties in the way of this view. But one cannot rely too much upon Polo's geographical accuracy, for when the general direction is from east to west, every new place reached is, to his mind, "west" of the last visited, while the Cauvery delta is as near the north point of Ceylon as Ramnad is to Apripo. It is probable that Sundhara Pandi's realm extended to the coast of the Gulf of Mannar, and in that case the difficulty regarding the pearl fishery is removed.

Patlam.—The author spells it Bettelar. It lies on the west coast of Ceylon.

Fish-charmers.—These men form part of the staff of the pearl fishery, owing to the superstitious belief of the divers that sharks and other harmful fishes can be rendered harmless by their art. The pearl-divers of the Pacific hold a similar belief.

Royalty.—The modern practice of governments is to sell the exclusive privilege of pearl-fishing for the season to the highest bidder, instead of taking a proportion of the produce, which seems to be more equitable.

Not a single tailor.—Evidently a mere flight of fancy.

One hundred and four.—The use of rosaries in counting repeated prayers is common to people of all religions.

The number of one hundred and four mentioned in the text is probably due to an error in copying from the original manuscript. One hundred and eight is the more likely figure.

Pacauta.—The word is printed in the Ramusio text as *Pacauca*, but *Pacauta* is the true reading. It is probably a corruption of “Bagavan,” the Sanskrit word for God.

Kish, etc.—The ports of Arabia and the Persian Gulf.

Saggio.—A Venetian weight of about one-sixth of an ounce.

A hundred marks of silver.—Approximately £320.

Farrier.—Shoeing-smith or horse-doctor.

Govis.—Low-caste Hindus, now called Pariahs.

St. Thomas.—The shrine was in an ancient Christian church in the small town of San Thomé, south of Madras. The saint is said to have been martyred while on a mission to India.

MOTUPALLI

Motupalli.—This obviously refers to Masulipatam. It belonged to the kingdom of Golconda, which Polo calls Telingana.

Diamonds.—The kingdom of Golconda, of which Masulipatam was the principal seaport, was famous for its diamond fields.

KING KAIDU'S DAUGHTER

Kaidu.—This king was a nephew of the Great Khan and made war upon him. He was defeated, but Kublai spared him because he was his kinsman.

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